

Interlocal Agreement Funding Request

Florida Inland Navigation District and The City of Fort Lauderdale

Bathrythmic Survey of the New River

November 7, 2023

The City of Fort Lauderdale is requesting Funding Assistance of \$6,998.00 from the Florida Inland Navigation District through an Interlocal Agreement to assist in the conducting of a Bathrythmic Survey of the New River in Fort Lauderdale Florida.

The purpose of this Bathrythmic Survey is to define and map the navigable channel in the New River, identify potential areas in need of dredging, guide future development policy decisions required to maintain its navigability and to monitor encroachment of shoreline development in certain areas.

The deepest parts of the river are not always in the middle of the river, but rather along its edges and the outer radii of the River's turns. Shoreline development unchecked can potentially constrict the New River and negatively impact the local marine industry and its economic impacts by reducing the ability of large vessels to navigate to the western service yards and restricting marine construction vessels access upriver to service waterfront businesses and residential properties along the river.

The New River is a tributary of the Atlantic Intra-Coastal Waterway and a major transportation route for commercial and recreational vessels, but also a vital resource for the property owners along its banks. By establishing a guided and clear policy, policy makers can strike a balance between navigational safety and the preservation of riparian rights of riverfront property owners.

The first step to developing a comprehensive use plan for the New River is to have up-to-date bathymetry of the New River. Identifying the path and depth of the channel and the width from riverbank to riverbank is critical to develop balanced development policies. The most recent study available dates to 2011. Environmental factors likely have changed since then. Sea level rise, increased vessel traffic and shoreline development with mooring structures have all contributed to congestion and the constriction of the New River. A Bathrythmic survey will identify areas of change when compared to the 2011 survey and reveal potential areas along the New River in need of developmental policy changes. For example, how mooring structure construction and seawall replacement occur in identified pinch points along the river.

The following items are factors for the consideration, creation and implementation of future development policies.

1. **Economics of South Florida:** The marine industry supports 142,000 jobs in the region, contributing \$6.9 billion in wages and earnings and results in more than \$18.5 billion in economic impact. Boatyards and service facilities located along the New River represent approximately 75% of the in-water repair facilities in the local area and are the keystones to the Marine industry's current and future economic success.

2. **Maritime Safety:** Increasing congestion and navigational challenges on the New River pose significant risks to both commercial and recreational vessels, their passengers, and the properties along its banks. Safe navigation facilitates tourism-related activities such as boat tours and recreational boating. Safe navigation measures can be established from future policies that ensure safe distances from private docks, minimize wake damage to waterfront structures, prevent unauthorized access to private properties and aid in avoiding vessel collisions and allisions.
3. **Recognition of Riparian Rights:** Riparian rights, including public access to the water and the intracoastal are essential to the property owners along the New River. Future policy can preserve these rights by establishing designated areas for vessel passing traffic, preventing encroachment on private properties, and ensuring that navigation activities do not unduly interfere with the enjoyment and use of the river by riparian landowners. Additionally, recognizing the importance of involving riparian landowners as stakeholders in the decision-making process is crucial. Their input and expertise can contribute significantly to the development of effective regulations that balance navigational needs with the preservation of riparian rights.
4. **Minimizing Erosion and Property Damage:** Wakes generated by vessels passing near the riverbanks contributes to erosion and damage to waterfront properties and seawalls. By establishing speed limits, no-wake zones, and other measures to mitigate these concerns can be implemented to protect the riparian lands and structures from potential harm.
5. **Environmental Conservation:** The New River is surrounded by diverse ecosystems and is home to various plant and animal species. Protecting the river's ecological integrity is crucial for maintaining the balance of these ecosystems. Safe navigation practices can prevent damage to the riverbed, reduce the risk of toxic spills or pollution, and ensure minimal disruption to the surrounding environment.
6. **Economic Value and Property Investments:** The preservation of riparian rights and the establishment of a safe and regulated navigation area can have positive economic implications. The south fork of New River represents 258,304 feet of shoreline, 2,476 private home slips and 288 slips in multifamily developments. Property values along the New River are closely tied to the quality of the river experience, and ensuring a well-maintained and safe navigable waterway will attract investment, tourism, and economic opportunities for the community.